

**Telephone Transfer** – If you have a programmable phone, set it up so you can have calls forwarded to another location. This will help assure continuity of communication should your primary phone be disabled, and help you keep in touch with customers & suppliers.

**Supplies** – Have food, clothing, shelter, and water available if you or your staff will have to remain on site for any period of time. Especially crucial for those who do not live nearby and might have problems getting out (or back into) the area.

**Back-up Equipment** – Air Compressor, electric generator. You might want these if you feel they could be of use during power outages, accidents, or natural disasters.

**Office Supplies** – Keep writing supplies, 'hardcopy' work orders, timesheets, etc, so you can continue business if some systems are down. Example: An auto shop can use a generic work order form to release a vehicle back to a customer.

**Keep all Receipts, Estimates, Contracts for Repair & Rehab Services** – They may be tax deductible or reimbursable by insurance claims.

#### More Resources:

**www.ready.gov** - Click on the "Ready Business" link for more ideas.

**www.fema.gov** - Click on the dark blue **Plan and Prepare** box to link to resources for emergency preparedness.

## Earthquake, Flood, Accident . . . Can Your Business Survive a Major Emergency Incident?

Developing an emergency plan for your business is the best way to ensure it will recover from a major catastrophe. Most small businesses impacted by major incidents never reopen; they have not planned how they will handle a disruption caused by an earthquake, fire, flood, chemical leak, utility disruption, or a simple accident. This brochure gives some basic ideas of what you can do to plan for, and recover from, most types of incidents with minimal disruption to your business and customers who depend on your services.



City of Huntington Beach Fire Department  
2000 Main Street, 5th Floor  
Huntington Beach, CA. 92648

(714)536-5469

(714)536-5411

[www.surfcity-hb.org](http://www.surfcity-hb.org)

## Emergency Planning Basics for Small Businesses



City of Huntington Beach  
Fire Department,  
Hazardous Materials  
Program

**You can't predict when an emergency incident will happen, but you CAN prepare for it in advance so the impact on your business will be minimized.**

A small business won't survive a major emergency incident such as an earthquake, major fire, loss of utilities, a chemical leak, or a major accident at or near their facility that requires a shut-down for any length of time. A little pre-planning can go a long way towards keeping your business in business with minimal disruption.

**I. "Whaddya Got?"; Management by Walking Around.**

Walk around and take a good look at the inside and outside of your facility (fire systems, storage areas, doors & aisles, utilities), locations of equipment, machinery, and chemicals/product ingredients. Take notes and focus on the following:

**Brace all Racking & Equipment** so it won't fall over in an moderate earthquake. Toppling storage racks can cause injury and product loss, and machinery can 'walk' during an earthquake and break chemical feed lines and utility connections.

**Chemical Storage & Identification.** Store drums or bulk containers on spill pallets or in bermed areas, smaller containers should be secured on shelves or in special storage cabinets. Restrain gas cylinders to prevent falling. Make sure all chemical containers are labeled for easy identification. Separate incompatible chemicals (Ex: Acids & bases). Anything sensitive to water or heat?

**How is Machinery Shut Down?** Is this a complex process or a simple throw switch.

**Chemical/Gas Delivery Systems Shutdown.** How do employees shut off flows through chemical/gas/dust/vapor distribution systems.

**What's Outside?** Are there hi-voltage electric power lines overhead, fire hydrants by the curb, a busy street? Any equipment on the roof?

**Hi Neighbor!** Find out who is in the surrounding buildings. Exchange basic information with them so you'll know who to contact in an emergency.

**Where are the Utility Shut-off Locations?** Electric,

gas, water, etc.—know where they are and how to turn them off. Check if special tools needed, and keep the area clear.

**Make Site Maps** Include locations for chemicals, utility & major machinery shut-off switches, fire sprinkler system controls. Make a simple evacuation map showing exit routes and assembly locations. Multiple maps are OK for larger facilities. MAKE 'EM SIMPLE AND EASY TO READ!

**Evacuation Routes & Exit Doors.** Maintain clear hallways or pathways through your facility. Exit doors should be clearly marked, equipped with single motion door hardware, and kept clear of debris both inside & outside. Large facilities should consider marking floors with exit pathways.

**Assembly Area.** Everyone should report here for roll call. Keep it upwind of your facility, and within sight of the building's address so you can meet emergency responders when they arrive. Larger facilities may need multiple assembly areas.

**II. Collect Important Information; Important Contacts and other Documents.**

**Contact Lists:** Do you have a list of your 'key' employees who live nearby, especially if they have knowledge of specialized processes at your facility. Also keep a listing of your hazardous materials suppliers (oils, & other lubes, etc.), hazardous waste hauler (clean-up contractor, too?), equipment suppliers (for repair parts and servicing of damaged equipment).

**Customer Lists** - Keep a list of important customers available so you can keep them informed of your business' status and their order's status.

**Paper Contact List** – Cell phones and PDA-type devices might not work in the event of a natural disaster, or they can be lost or damaged, so make sure you have a hardcopy of all vital information.

**Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)** - Assemble these for all your hazardous chemicals (ESPECIALLY UNIQUE CHEMICALS). They contain valuable information that emergency responders can use to quickly stabilize an incident or render emergency medical aid.

**Documents such as Insurance Coverage, Lease Agreements, Waste Manifests** – Does your business insurance cover losses due to Earthquakes, Floods, water damage from Fire Sprinklers, etc. Does it provide for relocation assistance if that's needed? Can you break a lease if building is uninhabitable for a period of time?

**III. Store All This Information in Multiple Locations.**

Make multiple copies of all this information and keep them in separate areas so they can be accessed during an emergency. Suggested is to put it in binders and store copies near the front door, near the back door, in your car trunk, even at home.

**IV. Training**

Emergency situations create anxiety, which leads to bad decisions. Training helps your staff cope with the chaos, and keeps a bad situation from getting worse.

**Basic Knowledge** All employees should know what the company does, should receive basic emergency training on evacuating the building, the assembly point, and how to call for help (any special phone procedures for "9-1-1" access?).

**Evacuation Drill** Have an occasional evacuation drill so everyone can practice how to get out and where to assemble. Don't forget to escort visitors out to the assembly area, too!

**Specialty Training** Key employees with unique knowledge of special production processes or equipment should know how to safely shut them down and turn them off. Also consider spill control equipment and training for chemical releases (*especially important for unique chemicals!*).

**V. Other Tips**

**Backup Your Computerized Records** Back-up your computer nightly to prevent loss of data, and store data offsite. If you can, TRANSFER the data to another location – associated business, your home computer, relative's computer, etc.. Ideally – Store it far enough away so it won't be affected by natural hazards (earthquakes, floods, etc).

**Major Equipment** – Keep records of major equipment you have at your facility. Keep purchasing documents, serial numbers, list of accessories purchased with it, and any other identification you'll need to verify what it is and its value in the future.

**Smile for the Camera!** – One picture is worth 1,000 words. Use one to document your current business activities, equipment, operations, facility, and surroundings., then after an emergency incident to record changes and/or damages (especially important for insurance claims). Save the pictures in multiple locations.